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Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the election of members of the Legal and Technical Commission

Election of members of the Legal and Technical Commission

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. At its twenty-third session, the Council of the International Seabed Authority requested that the Secretary-General provide it with a report on the cost-effectiveness of the current membership of the Legal and Technical Commission and a comparison between the Commission as currently constituted, with 30 members, and its previous membership. The present report is submitted in response to that request and provides an update to the detailed report prepared for the twenty-third session (ISBA/23/C/2).

II. Effectiveness of the Commission

2. As currently constituted, the Commission held two series of meetings in 2017 and one series of meetings in March 2018. On each occasion, 27 out of 30 members attended. Three members resigned prior to the first meeting in 2017. The resulting vacancies were filled by the election of new members in August 2017. One member resigned prior to the meetings in March 2018, which his successor was able to attend after being elected by the Council during the week before the meetings.

3. The work of the Commission has been dominated by the review of the recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the assessment of the possible environmental impacts arising from exploration for marine minerals in the Area (ISBA/19/LTC/8), the development of the regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area and the review of annual reports of activities by contractors. For the development of the regulations and the review of annual reports, the Commission broke up into working groups. There is no indication that the working practices of the Commission were affected by the increased number of members compared with previous Commissions or by the number in attendance at its meetings.

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III. Implications for the voluntary trust fund

4. Based on the current composition of each body, 14 members of the Legal and Technical Commission and 7 members of the Finance Committee are eligible for support from the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation of members of the Legal and Technical Commission from developing countries and members of the Finance Committee from developing countries in the meetings of the Commission and of the Committee. If all eligible members requested support, the costs would amount to approximately $216,000 per annum. Actual expenditure may be slightly lower, as some eligible members do not request support from the fund, but the cost of supporting the Commission alone is estimated to be at least $140,000 per annum (based on a two-part session each year).

5. The table below shows the number of members of the Commission who have received assistance from the voluntary trust fund in 2017 and 2018.

	February and March 2017	*August 2017*	*March 2018*
Number of Commission members assisted	8	8	11
Total amount of assistance from the fund (United States dollars)	**57 523**	**52 353**	**62 137**

6. For comparison purposes, the table below shows the same information for the previous membership since the establishment of the fund.

	Membership for the period 2007–2011						*Membership for the period 2012–2016*				
	2006	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016 (part I + part II)*
Number of Commission members who benefited from the fund	5	6	6	9	8	8	7	4	4	4	5+7
Total amount of assistance from the fund (United States dollars)	**20 311.51**	**26 042.72**	**27 941**	**45 401**	**34 615**	**42 357**	**42 401.91**	**9 307.49**	**23 209.79**	**35 003.98**	**35 285 + 51 494.43**

IV. Recommendations

7. The Council is invited to take note of the information contained in the present report. The Secretary-General has no further recommendations beyond those contained in ISBA/23/C/2.